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NPS Transportation Program

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Project Profile: The Jackson Hole Valley North 89 Pathway

A new multi-use pathway, now under development, connects the Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) pathway system to a rapidly growing pathway system in the Jackson Hole Valley, and links bicyclists and pedestrians to the National Elk Refuge, the National Wildlife Art Museum, and the gateway community of Jackson, Wyoming.

The North 89 Pathway parallels Teton Park Road, providing visitors and residents a safe alternative to the high-volume park artery, which can carry up to 18,000 cars per day.

The new six-mile pathway showcases a remarkable partnership between



Construction started on the North 89 Pathway in 2010. Photo by Friends of Pathways, Jackson, WY



federal, state and local government agencies, along with help from local nonprofit Friends of Pathways and the National Museum of Wildlife Art. Partnership highlights include the highly supportive community of Jackson, which approved an \$850,000 ballot initiative in August 2010, providing the final funding needed for the \$5 million project.

Teton County is the lead agency for project management on the North 89 Pathway. The county completed four miles of pathway in the fall of 2010, and construction contracts are fully let to complete the full six miles by September

2011. Unique construction features include a 300' pathway bridge across the Gros Ventre River, and a pathway underpass connection to the National Museum of Wildlife Art. The museum has plans for a \$3.5 million outdoor sculpture trail that will be accessible from the pathway.

South of the GTNP boundary, the North 89 Pathway will link the national park's pathway system and an impressive local pathway system in the Jackson Hole valley. Teton County and the Town of Jackson, Wyoming, have completed 40 miles of a planned 75-mile pathway system. With a 6-mile section of the GTNP pathway

Funding for the North 89 Pathway was secured from several sources:

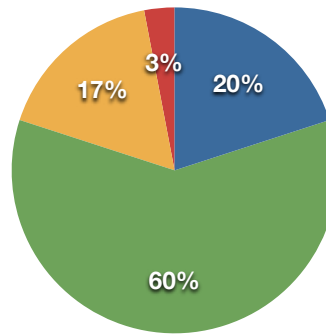
A Town of Jackson Scenic Byway Grant for the Wyoming Centennial Byway funded the concept design and environmental clearances;

Teton County secured two Paul S. Sarbanes

Transit in Parks grants totaling \$3 million;

The Wyoming Department of Transportation awarded \$1 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Stimulus funds;

Local voters in the community of Jackson approved \$850,000 in local funds for the project.



- Local funds approved by Town of Jackson
- Scenic Byway Grant for WY Centennial Byway
- Wyoming DOT ARRA Stimulus Funds
- Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks grants

directly connecting the North 89 Pathway to the Park pathway from Moose to Jenny Lake, a cyclist or pedestrian will be able to travel more than 20 miles along a separated pathway from Jackson to Jenny Lake.

The North 89 Pathway parallels US-26/89 along the western edge of the National Elk Refuge — operated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), providing outstanding opportunities by bicycle and on foot to see the Elk Refuge and stunning vistas of the Grand Tetons.

The federal funding combined with local voter funds is a great investment for the Jackson Hole Valley, supporting tourism in the community, and providing greatly enhanced public land access for the 3.5 million annual visitors to Jackson Hole and the National Parks.

The pathway is subject to a seasonal closure between October 1 and April 30 each year in order to reduce impacts to migrating and wintering elk and other wildlife on the National Elk Refuge. The closure is a condition of the agreement between Teton County and the USFWS, which has granted permission to the County to construct and operate the pathway on USFWS property.

The North 89 Pathway connects to a new multi-use pathway now being developed in the Grand Teton National Park. This 42-mile pathway



The North 89 Pathway parallels the National Elk Refuge. The path will be closed each year from October 1 to April 30 to reduce impacts on migrating and wintering elk.

Photo by Friends of Pathways, Jackson, WY

system is the most significant cycling/pedestrian facility ever designed and approved for a national park. Located in northwestern Wyoming, GTNP is one of the top-10 most visited national parks.

In 2006, Grand Teton personnel completed a planning process and environmental impact statement that evaluated how the Park could provide sustainable transportation choices, while also protecting natural resources. Considering comments received during the public review of the Draft Transportation Plan/EIS, NPS staff developed a preferred alternative that combined elements of two alternatives that had been presented in the draft plan, resulting in the planned 42-mile multi-use pathway system within the Park.

The plan calls for construction of 22.5 miles of multi-use pathways outside of existing road corridors, construction of 18.8 miles of multi-use pathways inside existing road corridors, and a realignment of the Moose-Wilson Road in two areas to restore aspen and wetland habitats. Development of the pathway system will occur in phases. Design work on the first phase—connecting Moose to South Jenny Lake—took place in 2007, and construction began in 2008.

Grand Teton National Park is well on its way to becoming a model park in this arena, by constructing a state-of-the art pathway system that achieves the Park's goals of promoting health and safety, improving air quality, and helping reduce impacts on wildlife and natural resources.

Linked with the North 89 Pathway, the Park's new multi-use pathway will provide visitor access for bicycling and walking, relieve traffic congestion, minimize resource impacts, connect local gateway communities, and enhance visitors' experiences.